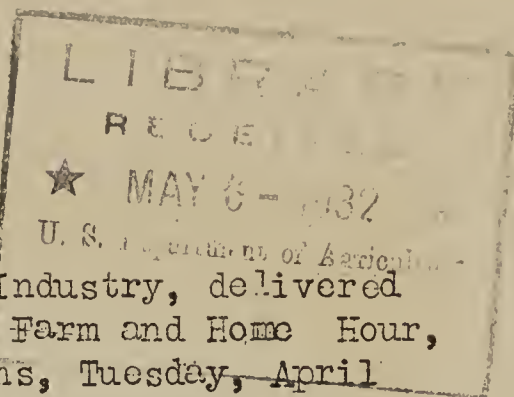


Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.9
Pg 9 Ra

THE GARDEN CALENDAR



A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, April 19, 1932.

- - - - -

Sunday -- April 10th -- was the sixtieth anniversary of the first observance of Arbor Day, which originated in Nebraska in 1872. Now, it happens that April 22nd, next Friday, is the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of J. Sterling Morton, who first proposed the observance of Arbor Day, and who served as Secretary of Agriculture from 1893 to 1897. Because of the difference in the most favorable time for tree planting in the various parts of the country, the dates for the observance of Arbor Day vary widely.

It is anticipated that these two anniversaries, April 10th, the original date of the observance of Arbor Day, and April 22nd, the date of the birth of the father of Arbor Day, will greatly increase interest in the observance of Arbor Day this year. Recent reports show that there is a great increase in tree planting this year as a part of the observance of the Washington Bi-Centennial. Thousands of trees are being planted on school grounds and in public places in memory of George Washington, and it is not too late in many parts of the country for tree planting.

Here is an idea for you folks who grow sweet potatoes. Experiments in North Carolina have shown that where the fertilizer is sown broadcast instead of putting it in the rows that you may get an increased yield of about 25 bushels to the acre. And what is more surprising, it was found that where the fertilizer was broadcast over the rows after the plants had been set and become well rooted, the best yields were obtained.

When I was a boy one of our neighbors often grew white potatoes under straw mulch and sometimes he had wonderful crops. Recently, the Ohio Experiment Station conducted experiments at Wooster, and at a point in southern Ohio to determine if increased yields could be secured by this method. In one of these experiments, Russet Rural was planted on May 19th, and two of the four plots were mulched immediately at the rate of 10 tons of straw to the acre which made a layer of about 8 or 10 inches deep when applied and about 4 inches deep after it had completely settled. The yields were about doubled by the mulch, but the season was especially favorable for obtaining benefits from mulch, that is, the mean temperature for June and September were above normal and the rainfall for the season was deficient.

In other experiments in Nebraska, Michigan, Illinois, and elsewhere, it has been shown that the straw mulch will increase the yields about two seasons out of three, but that the benefits are obtained mainly in the central and southern sections where the mean temperature is frequently above the ideal for growing potatoes. Up in the northern sections where cool nights and abundant rainfall are favorable for potatoes, we would not expect very marked results in favor of mulching. Where early potatoes are mulched the straw should not be put on until after the potatoes are up and that means that you will have to be extremely careful to avoid breaking the plants.

(over)

We get a good many letters asking how to grow mushrooms. When you're either growing mushrooms or gathering the wild ones you must know your mushrooms or you are liable to be dealing with poisonous varieties. A lot of people have gotten the idea that they can grow mushrooms in their cellars or in caves and get rich at it. To answer these questions, Miss Vera K. Charles of the Bureau of Plant Industry, wrote a little bulletin on Mushroom Culture for Amateurs. It is Farmers' Bulletin No. 1587 in which the author says that "success in growing these delicious fungi all depends on knowing how, and that carelessness has no place in mushroom growing." The author also says that "a large initial expense is not necessary, but it is best to begin in a very small way, then if the business will warrant you can expand." Miss Charles says that "unused buildings, cellars or basements may be remodeled and adapted for mushroom growing." If you have any idea of embarking in the fascinating business of mushroom growing, I would advise you to get a copy of Farmers' Bulletin No. 1-5-8-7, and not only read its 16 pages, but study the directions carefully before you turn one forkful of manure for a mushroom bed.

This morning, while the Missus was frying the bacon and making the biscuits for breakfast, I entertained myself by transplanting a couple of hundred seedling tomato plants. While I was handling those plants, I couldn't help thinking about how much the future of each plant depended upon the chance it gets during its early stages. If I leave them in the seedbed just a day or two longer, they will be tall and spindling, but if I transplant them just at the right time and give each plant an equal opportunity, they will practically all grow into large, sturdy, healthy plants suitable for setting in the garden.

Later, when it comes to setting these plants in the garden, the same rule as to proper spacing will apply. When I transplant my plants in the coldframe, I set them about 4 inches apart in each direction then when it comes to setting the plants in the garden, I run a trowel or a knife between them and cut the soil in blocks with a plant in the center of each block. Then as I set the plants, I always place a little collar of stiff paper about 3 inches high around the stem of each plant to protect it from cutworms.

Now folks, I see Mr. Salisbury is holding up his finger to indicate that my time is up, but I want to remind you that the meeting of the Progressive Garden Club will be on the air at this time next Tuesday - and until then, so long.